

NATIONAL MINORITY ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT WEEK SEPTEMBER 6 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2004

A series of events are being planned in Washington, DC to provide business development opportunities and management assistance to minority entrepreneurs. This year's MED Week theme is "Forward to the Future, Minority Business Enterprise: The National Priority."

During MED Week, SBA traditionally recognizes minority business excellence and achievement by cosponsoring national commemoration activities with the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Nominations are being solicited for Minority Small Business Person of the Year. If you are interested in nominating someone for this award, call Mary Brilakis or Robert Much at (406) 441-1081 and the documentation will be sent to you. Nominations must be sent to the Montana District SBA office no later than June 11, 2004.

SBA EXPO '04

Michelle Johnston, District Director of the Montana SBA District office, along with approximately three thousand small business owners, attended the U.S. Small Business Administration's SBA Expo '04 in Orlando, Florida, May 19-21, 2004 at the Orange County Convention Center. Expo celebrates the contributions of small businesses during National Small Business Week. Kim Wild, President and General Manager of TowHaul in Belgrade, MT was one of ten national Champion Award winners. Ms. Wild was selected as Montana's Small Business Exporter of the year and then beat out the competition for Region VIII, and subsequently won the Small Business National Exporter of the Year award.

SBA CELEBRATES SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

SBA's annual Small Business Week Awards luncheon took place on May 7, 2004 at the Doubletree Inn in Missoula.

Bill Woody of Nightingale Nursing Services, Inc. of Missoula was selected as SBA's 2004 Montana Small Business Person of the Year. Other award winners are as follows:

- **First Runner-up Small Business Person of the Year** – Jack Morgernstern, Century Companies, Inc., Lewistown
- **National Small Business Exporter of the Year** – Kim Wild, TowHaul Corporation, dba Smith Equipment USA, Belgrade
- **Woman Owned Business of the Year** – Jennifer Keck, Big Sky Travel Nurses, Inc., Conrad
- **Entrepreneurial Success Award** – Rick & Nicki Larson, Employee Benefit Management Services, Inc., Billings

- **Young Entrepreneur of the Year** – Ryan Deskins, R&R Pressure Washing, Helena
- **Main Street Business of the Year** – Mandi Heinle & Sarah Hamlen, Innovative Marketing Solutions, LLC, Hathaway
- **Financial Services Advocate of the Year** – Jerry Sullivan, Flint Creek Valley Bank/Granite Mountain Bank, Philipsburg
- **Home-based Business Advocate of the Year** – Sheryle Shandy, Montana Harvest and Montana Harvest Gift Boutique, Billings
- **Small Business Journalists of The Year** – Flathead Business Journal, Kalispell
- **Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year** – Craig Smith, Fort Peck Community College, TBIC, Fort Peck
- **Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year** – Joe Fletcher, Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center
- **Women in Business Advocate of the Year** – Joy Ott, Wells Fargo Bank of Montana, N.A. Billings

SBA's ABBREVIATED 8(a) APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

SBA has initiated a new pilot program for reviewing 8(a) applications. The application process will be broken down into three distinct review categories and the documents and analysis level required under those review categories. The categories are as follows:

1. **Review Procedure** – When an application is received it will be logged into the Certification Tracking System (CTS) an assigned to an analyst for screening and processing. Following an initial review, it should then be tracked by one of the following three review processes.
 - A. **BASIC REVIEW PROCESS** – This review will require minimal verification, as the applications that fall into this category involve non-complex cases meeting the basic six criteria of social disadvantage, economic disadvantage, ownership, control an management, potential for success and character.
 - B. **LIMITED REVIEW PROCESS** – Approval of applications falling within this category is contingent upon further analysis. These applications are considered somewhat more complex than those within the Basic Review process.

C. FULL REVIEW PROCESS – Approval of applications falling within this category is highly complex and requires a detailed and thorough review of the application. The San Francisco Central Office Duty Station and the Philadelphia Central Office Duty Station will be involved in the subject pilot program until September 30, 2004 where it will be subject to evaluation by the Office of Certification and Eligibility.

SBA REGULATIONS CREATES CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS

The new rule will amend the relevant sections of the Code of Federal Regulations, adding provisions that will allow contracting officers to restrict contract awards to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses when there is a reasonable expectation that two or more service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses will submit bids at a fair market price. It also allows awards of sole-source contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses when there is not a reasonable expectation that two or more service-disabled veteran-owned firms will submit bids and the anticipated contract price does not exceed \$3 million, with the exception of manufacturing contracts where the contracting threshold is \$5 million.

The interim rule allows small businesses to self-certify as service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. Any challenge to a firm's status as a small business or standing as a service-disabled veteran-owned small business must be referred to the SBA for resolution. The SBA will rely upon existing Department of Veteran's Affairs or Department of Defense determinations regarding status and will help enforce penalties for false representation

8(a) DIVISION ACQUIRES TWO NEW FIRMS

The Montana District Office welcomes the following two construction firms to their portfolio:

Spaulding Construction of Stevensville, MT

Mike Spaulding, owner, formed his own construction company in 1989. Spaulding Construction is capable of performing all phases of road construction and reconstruction, pipe installations, fire rehabilitation, gravel products and rip-rap material, retaining walls and gabions. Mike can be reached at (406) 777-3795.

H L Construction, Inc. of Billings, MT

Heather Long, President, started her construction company April 1, 2003 with many years of experience to her credit. H L Construction, Inc., provides services including guardrail installation, signing, major bridge repair, concrete work and traffic control for highway construction projects. Heather can be reached at (406) 245-0575.

SBA LAUNCHES WEB SITE TO CONNECT BUSINESSES WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the launch of a new web site that will serve as *the* business gateway for U.S. businesses to connect with federal agencies, providing specific business tools and resources. Business.gov is a powerful web site that will provide one-stop, online federal government information and services that businesses need and can access in one easy-to-find location.

Business.gov provides information and links to:

- Business Development: information on starting, managing and marketing a business.
- Financial Assistance: resources for capital and credit.
- Taxes: federal and state tax resources, forms and assistance.
- Laws and Regulations: Laws, regulations and other resources that affect business.
- International Trade: information on export promotion, trade finance and trade leads.
- Workplace Issues: information on employee wellness, workplace safety, benefits and the family-friendly workplace.
- Buying and Selling: links for doing business with the government.
- Federal forms: finding government forms businesses need to conduct business, expand and grow.

Business.gov is slated to add more resources by the fall of 2004, including more information, sources and links designed to help businesses get the right information at the right time. Business.gov will also add special "wizards" to help businesses find answers to their questions, fill out forms, save time and be more productive.



If you have a news item you would like to have published in a future newsletter, contact Mary Brilakis, Editor, at (406) 441-1081, or e-mail: mary.brilakis@sba.gov.